

# NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANEA

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## **Notes on Some Tennessee Salamanders of the Genus *Pseudotriton***

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The herpetological collections of The Chicago Academy of Sciences have been enriched during recent years by many series of amphibians and reptiles collected in Tennessee by William F. Ross. During a recent visit to the Academy, I was able to examine some salamanders collected by him. For this courtesy, and for permission to report on certain of these specimens, I am indebted to the director, Dr. Howard K. Gloyd.

The East Gulf Coastal Plain and the Interior Low Plateau provinces are separated in western Tennessee by the Tennessee River. The trenchant nature of the faunae of these provinces is well brought out by some salamanders of the genus *Pseudotriton*.

The Academy's collections include a fine example of *Pseudotriton ruber vioscai* Bishop, taken by Ross on June 7, 1945, ten miles northeast of Bolivar, Hardeman County, Tennessee. It constitutes the first record for this form from the state. The specimen is a female measuring 160 mm. in total length, of which the tail (measuring from the posterior angle of the vent) comprises 59 mm. This is larger than any specimen reported previously; Bishop's largest specimen (*Handbook of Salamanders*, 1943, p. 399) was 148 mm., total length. The costal grooves are 15, or 16 if a poorly developed axillary groove is counted. The vomerines commence well beyond the outer margin of the nares, arch upward slightly, then curve down toward the parasphenoids with which they are confluent. The oviducts contain numerous, fairly well-developed ova, apparently not quite ready for deposition. The normal pattern for this subspecies is well reproduced in the specimen at hand (see figure).

While additions to state faunal lists are always of some interest, the present record was to be expected in view of the many records for *P. r. vioscai* from other localities within the East Gulf Coastal Plain. However, the importance of the *vioscai* specimen is heightened by an example of *Pseudotriton ruber ruber* (Sonnini) collected by Ross ten miles east of Waynesboro, Wayne County, Tennessee, on April 26, 1941.

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The *vioscai* locality is in the East Gulf Coastal Plain, while the *ruber* station is in the Interior Low Plateau province, scarcely seventy airline miles to the east. Each of these localities is about 30 miles distant from the Tennessee River. Both the *vioscai* and the *ruber* show no differences from specimens taken well within their respective ranges. No evidence of intergradation toward one form or the other is apparent.

Speculation based on two specimens is the epitome of futility in the present case; it can only be assumed that so far as these two examples go, *ruber* and *vioscai* are effectively limited to their respective physiographic provinces in western Tennessee, although they may meet and intergrade elsewhere. Whether the Tennessee River is the barrier between these races, as it is between the physiographic provinces they occupy, or whether the ecological requirements of each form are not met in both provinces, is not at present determinable.

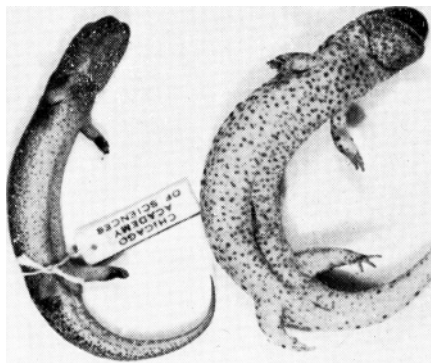
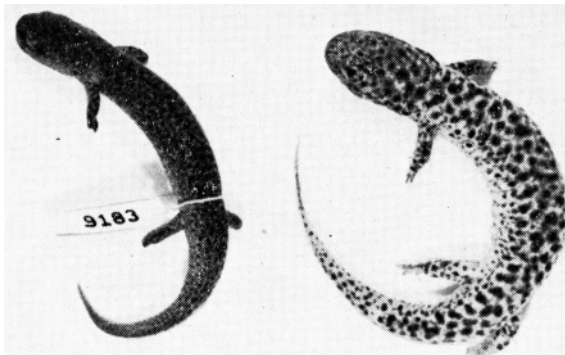


Figure 1

Left (above and below): *Pseudotriton ruber ruber* m , CA 9183. Ten miles east of Waynesboro, Wayne County, Tennessee; April 26, 1941. Actual length 113 mm.

Right (above and below): *Pseudotriton ruber vioscai* 9 , CA 13007. Ten miles north-east of Bolivar, Hardeman County, Tennessee; June 7, 1945. Actual length 160 mm.